

PRESS RELEASE

August 25, 2006

RE: UNITED STATES v. LAWRENCE OKUN

United States Attorney Terrance P. Flynn announced today that LAWRENCE OKUN, age 53, of Tonawanda, New York, pled guilty before the Hon. John T. Elfvin, United States District Court Judge, to a Felony Information charging him with one count of theft of government money, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641, carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000.00, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John E. Rogowski, who handled the case, stated that during the period of 1992 through March 2005, the defendant collected Social Security disability benefits because he claimed to be physically unable to work. In 1997, the defendant began working. However, in order to continue to his receipt of social security disability payments, OKUN worked using the name and social security number of his deceased brother. The defendant, by working under the identity of his deceased brother, wrongfully collected over \$108,000 in disability benefits to which he was not otherwise entitled.

The plea was the culmination of an investigation on the part

of the Social Security Administration-Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Stephen J. Petro, Resident Agent in Charge, Batavia, New York.

Sentencing is scheduled for December 15, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. in front of the Judge Elfvin.